

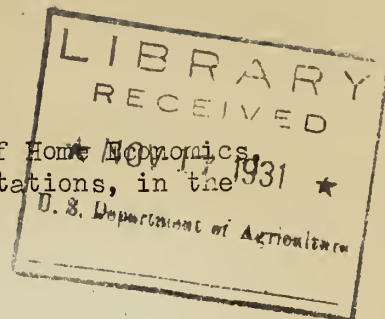
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[The weight question]

A radio talk by Rowena Schmidt Carpenter, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered through Station WRC and 44 other associate NBC stations, in the National Farm and Home Hour, Thursday, November 5, 1931.



How do you do, Homemakers!

How much do you weigh,--or haven't you thought much about it? There are, you know, boundary lines above or below which we should not go if our weight is to be desirable for our build at any age. Insurance companies are constantly studying the relation of weight to health, and have issued tables to guide us in keeping within normal limits, because weight isn't just a matter of personal vanity. It is really an indication of how things are going inside of us. So if you weigh decidedly more or less than the average for your height and age, it's up to you either to prove you are in your best health "as is", or to do something about it.

It is really because so many of you are writing us from time to time about dieting to change your body weight that I decided to talk to you about it today. A very frequent request from you is "Tell me how to reduce". But there are perhaps just as many of you who ask: "How can I put on weight? My doctor says I must gain, and I can't seem to eat any more than I already do". Too bad there isn't a magic pill to take for either extreme, isn't it?

Whether you ask us about getting fatter or thinner than you are, some of the things we write to you are the same. One of them is to consult your physician before setting out to make any drastic change in body weight. Another thing we tell you is that you can control your weight by balancing the amount of energy-giving food you eat with the amount of energy you spend. All of us spend some energy in just living you know, and some more in our usual day's activities, but we need also to take some systematic exercise, and then to balance up this total use of energy with enough rest and a carefully chosen diet.

It's the diet that you want to know more about, and it may surprise you to hear me say that it isn't so much a matter of WHAT we eat that controls our body weight, -- at least not WHAT in the sense some diet faddists would have you believe. It is, rather, both WHAT AND HOW MUCH. It is perfectly possible either to gain or to lose weight on well-balanced diet that meets all of the need of good nutrition, and that is the only sane way to go about changing your body weight. You know without my telling you that we all need good protein foods, minerals, and vitamins, and some sources of energy. It is the energy-giving or fuel goods that are high in calories. They must be increased in the diet that allows more energy-material than is to be used, so as to leave a surplus to store as body fat. Starches, sugars, and fats, or foods that are either rich in these materials or have had them added in the cooking, can be added to or subtracted from a well-balanced diet to turn it into a fattening or a reducing one. It isn't necessary for you to actually count your calories if you watch and adjust the quantities of fuel foods you are eating. Just remember that doughnuts or rich cookies, butter cake, pastry, a box of candy, a side dish of marmalade, a scoop of salted nuts, lots of cream, butter and sugar, or a double-rich chocolate something-or-other can throw the balance of the scales up before you realize it. Remember, too, that these added calories count whether you indulge in them with your meals, over the bridge table, in the confectionery

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shop, or while lounging over a book.

If you really need to change your weight and are in earnest about wishing to do so, you will find a great many suggestions in an eight-page, mimeographed circular which we have prepared to help you. It is called "Consider your Weight". You may have a copy by writing to your station or to the United States Bureau of Home Economics in Washington.

I want to give you just this hint: Don't feel discouraged if the scales fail to show immediately the effect of your efforts. Whatever you weigh is a total of both tissue and water. Often water is retained temporarily in the body while fatty tissue is being used up. And, on the other hand, the replacing of water by fat may occur slowly. Neither of these changes will show on the scales at first. Not until there is a decided change in the composition of your body will your weight tell the tale, and yet you must not try to gain or lose too rapidly. You can expect noticeable results within three or four weeks if you are controlling your diet and accustoming your body to systematic exercise as suggested.

Goodbye, Homemakers, until next Thursday!